

# CHRISTIAN MONEY \$ENSE

BBC FOUNDATION • CLARKS SUMMIT, PA

## Are You a Customer or a Steward?

*Chris Rudolph, CPA*

Have you ever bought something from a store and had it break because it was defective? When we pay for something, we expect the store to give some type of consideration if the product is defective. Recently I bought a hand held computer to put my personal information in. I am learning that my mind can only handle remembering so many tasks. After I bought the computer, it malfunctioned several times so that all the information inside it was lost. This did not make me a happy customer! I was even less happy when I tried to return the item and I was given problems about it. Whatever happened to "the customer is always right"? This notion is one for business, not for God.

How do you view your giving to God's work? As a symbol to God that all of what you have is His and what remains is a blessing, or a payment for which you want something in return? In other words, are you God's steward or His customer? Many places in the Bible, God talks about how He will bless abundantly those who give to His work (the church, the poor, the widow), and I believe He will. Jesus talked about this when He was on earth (Luke 6:38). God told this to His people (Malachi 3:8-10). However, this can be a pitfall of seeing our giving as a reason to demand customer service from God.

There have been times that I have thought, "I have been giving a lot, and God said that He would bless me for it. So why are my investments doing so poorly? Why did I not get the big raise or bonus I thought I deserved? Where is the big envelope full of money that I want?" I might as well throw in there, "Why did no money grow on my money tree this year?" You may think these questions are absurd, but some of us can be lured into thinking this way when our view of ourselves becomes distorted.

Because of the great God we serve and the great country we live in, we can be fooled into believing we deserve to be serviced. This is not a correct view. We are stewards, not customers. Stewards are servants

who have been given a responsibility with something that has been given to them. The things that we have are not ours; they are God's. We need to keep this perspective.

One of the things that God has given to us for our stewardship is financial resources. If you are given a little or much, you are still a steward. If you give much or little to the Lord's work, you are still a steward. We should want to do well with our Master's resources and grow what our Master has given us because that is what a good steward does. This is for the Master's benefit, not ours, because everything we have is His!

We should also remember that although some stewards are responsible for greater amounts of resources, this never turns them into customers that should be demanding service. Is not God the one who has given to some much and to some little? We must temper this, however, with the need for financial accountability. No one who has given much wants to see it go to waste, especially when it was meant to be an offering to the Master. All of our thoughts on stewardship should be viewed through the lens of "Is this idea in line with the Master's mission?" and "Is this for the pleasure of the Master solely with nothing that would take it off this focus?"

Someday there will be an accounting of your stewardship. There won't be a chance to be a customer then, so why do it now?

---

BBC Foundation has been ministering to churches and individuals regarding biblical stewardship since 1992. Send your questions on finances and stewardship to: BBC Foundation, 538 Venard Rd., Clarks Summit, PA 18411. Phone: (800) 451-8668, website: [bbcfoundation.org](http://bbcfoundation.org); e-mail: [info@bbcfoundation.org](mailto:info@bbcfoundation.org)